April 2011

CCOVInews

A newsletter from the Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute

CCOVI
Brock University

The new faces of CCOVI

When George Kotseridis left Greece in January to work in the Great White North, the new CCOVI Oenologist wasn't quite prepared for the temperature change—from a balmy 15ºC in Athens to an icy –19ºC the day he landed in Toronto. But that didn't cool his enthusiasm for the new adventure. His love of wine and our challenging industry is what attracted him to team up with the Institute.

"The Canadian grape and wine industry has a huge potential for growth," says Kotseridis. "Being able to work with CCOVI's great facilities and knowledgeable researchers will allow me to do my share in helping advance the industry."

He is already hard at work, splitting his time between research and outreach to the industry. "I'm developing new winemaking techniques to better target preferred flavour profiles in a variety of grapes that I believe are very marketable. I'm also interested in studying the problem of high acidity, a common problem found in cool climate wines."

On the outreach front, he is developing new tests to enhance CCOVI analytical services, including oak barrel compounds and *Brettanomyces* analyses.

Kotseridis has also been providing his expertise on specific issues raised during VQA Winemakers Forums with fellow Viticulturist Jim Willwerth. The forums foster informal discussions among VQA winemakers about best practices in winemaking, vintage specific issues and techniques suitable for Ontario's climate. This is an opportunity for new winemakers to network with colleagues, and to compare notes about what works and what doesn't.

The next forum will take place at CCOVI on May 26 at 9 a.m. To reserve a seat, contact VQA at 416-367-2002.

Kotseridis can be reached at 905-688-5550 x6123 or gkotseridis@brocku.ca.

George Kotseridis (left) and Jim Willwerth (right)

In Canada, many cold-sensitive grape varieties are grown because of their consumer appeal. Climate change and the impact on winter injury is a big threat for the industry.

That's where CCOVI Viticulturist Jim Willwerth comes into the picture, by researching vine cold hardiness, investigating new varieties suitable to our cool climate and keeping the industry informed on viticulture advances.

"I work with dedicated growers and great people at CCOVI, KCMS and the Grape Growers of Ontario, to name a few," says Willwerth. "It's exciting to be involved in a collaborative project that makes a difference and allows the industry to become more competitive."

On many days, Willwerth can be found tracking through vineyards, often in a foot of snow (after this winter, he will be buying snowshoes next year). Being in the field is where he gets much of the crucial data that he applies to a number of projects including VineAlert, grape pre-harvest monitoring during the fall and workshops in Ontario and with other grape and wine provinces such as Nova Scotia and Quebec.

Willwerth can be reached at 905-688-5550 x5477 or jwillwerth@brocku.ca.

Students for hire

Planning to hire vineyard, winery or retail staff?

Recruit our graduates and students who are skilled in winemaking, viticulture and wine business.

Students in the Oenology and Viticulture (OEVI) program at Brock University are seeking jobs for 2011.

To have a position posted for our OEVI students call: 905-688-5550 x4949 or e-mail: jennifer.roberts@brocku.ca

What's inside

Brock grads win at Cuvée 2
VQA Promoters Awards 2
Research Q&A 3
New Brock grad 3
Nova Scotia industry visits Niagara 3
Briefs & Publications 4
Riesling Experience 4
CCOVI Lecture Series continues 4
Watch the CCOVI Lectures on TV 4
Wine Tasting Challenge winners 4

Brock grads win at Cuvée 2011

From left to right: Scott MacDonald, Manager of Horticulture and Specialty Products for BASF Canada Inc., Kevin Donohue and Debbie Inglis, CCOVI Director *(Photo courtesy: The Standard)*

Graduates of the Brock OEVI program won big at the Cuvée Gala on March 4 at the Niagara Fallsview Casino.

Emma Garner, Angela Kasimos, Rob Power, Tom Green and Jason Roller won eight Cuvée gold awards while Gordon Robert and Fred DiProfio both garnered second place finishes out of a total of 22 awards.

Brock OEVI grad Kevin Donohue, Vineyard Manager at Colio Estate Wines, was presented with a Cuvée Award of Excellence in Viticulture, which recognizes an individual who promotes excellence in their vineyard practices.

"Kevin is an ideal recipient of this distinguished award," said Debbie Inglis, CCOVI Director. "He is an influential individual whose knowledge and hard work helps advance the Ontario grape and wine industry."

Cuvée is a wine competition whereby Ontario's winemakers submit a selection of only their finest wines to be judged by a panel of their peers.

Meet the winemakers who won:

- Red wine: Thirty Bench Wine Makers, Small Lot Cabernet Franc 2007 (Emma Garner)
- White wine: Riverview Cellars Winery, Gewürztraminer 2009 (Angela Kasimos)
- Limited edition white wine: Creekside Estate Winery, Queenston Road Vineyard Reserve Viognier 2009 (Rob Power)
- LCBO red wine: EastDell Estates Winery, Black Cab 2009 (Tom Green and Jason Roller)
- Limited edition sweet wine: Stoney Ridge Cellars, Gewürztraminer Icewine Barrel Fermented Barrel Aged 2009 (Gordon Robert) (2nd place)
- Chardonnay: Pondview Estate Winery, Barrel Fermented/Aged Chardonnay 2009 (Fred DiProfio) (2nd place)
- Gewürztraminer: Riverview Cellars Winery, Gewürztraminer 2009 (Angela Kasimos)
- Sauvignon Blanc: Creekside Estate Winery, Creekside Estate Vineyard, Reserve Sauvignon Blanc 2009 (Rob Power)
- Viognier: Creekside Estate Winery, Queenston Road Vineyard Reserve Viognier 2009 (Rob Power)
- Cabernet Franc: Thirty Bench Wine Makers, Small Lot Cabernet Franc 2007 (Emma Garner)

VQA Promoters Awards

CCOVI's own Christopher Waters (left), winner of the Education Award, with Charles Baker (right) from Stratus Vineyards

Six individuals of varying backgrounds but with the same passion for Ontario wines have been singled out at the 2011 VQA Promoters Awards.

The awards were announced on March 5 during the Experts' Tasting. Each year, this educational component of the Cuvée weekend is hosted by CCOVI.

The 2011 VQA Promoters Awards winners are:

- Media: Suresh Doss, food writer and publisher of the website Spotlight Toronto.
- LCBO: Orest Poluch, LCBO product consultant in Guelph, ON.
- Hospitality: Jeremy Day, owner of Toronto's Café Taste.
- Education: Christopher Waters, editor of Vines Magazine and continuing education instructor at CCOVI, Brock University.
- Promoter at Large: Bill Redelmeier, owner of Niagara-based Southbrook Vineyards.
- Lifetime Achievement: Billy Munnelly, wine writer.

Billy Munnelly (left), Lifetime Achievement Award recipient at this year's event, with Charles Baker

Research Q&A

Heritage, identity and the Niagara grape and wine industry

CCOVI Fellow and Brock Geography Professor Michael Ripmeester is investigating the drivers behind a region's identity, in collaboration with Professor Russell Johnston from Brock's department of Popular Culture, Communication and Film.

What is the focus of your research?

I have a lifelong interest in cultural and historical geography. Most recently, I have been investigating the ways in which Niagara residents build identities through heritage landscapes.

How does your research tie in with the grape and wine industry?

My colleague Russell Johnston and I were involved with the Popular Culture Niagara Research Group and we explored how Niagara residents related to material commemorations (i.e. historic monuments, sites, etc.). Between 2005 and 2009 we asked hundreds of locals what makes the Niagara region unique.

We anticipated that participants would identify an important person such as Laura Secord, a historical event such as the War of 1812, or the Welland Canal. We were surprised to find that our participants identified "wine" as an important characteristic.

To explain these findings we need to understand the region's popular memory in terms of relevance to the population. Given the region's relatively cool political, economic, social and culture climates, it is no surprise that stories celebrating foundation and long-ago battles are not top-of-mind for residents. However, since the 1980s the grape and wine industry has been growing exponentially, thanks to extensive rebranding and promotional efforts by the industry and governments. We are surrounded by symbolic reminders of the industry. We see Wine Route signage along major highways and roads; some of us attend annual wine events such as the Niagara Wine Festival; and there is an emerging fine dining industry taking shape in the region. In addition, grapes and wine fit the small family-run agricultural business that has long characterized this region. It's not surprising, therefore, that residents were able to link the grape and wine industry to that heritage story.

What else have you found in your studies?

We found that many of our participants are aware of the importance of the grape and wine industry in Niagara, and are also aware that the industry has rebranded itself as an upscale, world-class destination to attract affluent wine lovers. It was also clear that some respondents felt that this strategy has somewhat changed the traditional agricultural focus of the region as well as land practices. As the popularity of wineries is growing, the access to land is more difficult since the value of agricultural land is increasing.

Brock harvests another grad in wine biotechnology

Fei Yang (right) and her supervisor Dr. Debbie Inglis

Fei Yang, graduate of the Biotechnology Masters program at Brock University, defended her thesis in January.

Her dissertation "Study of new yeast strains as novel starter cultures for Riesling Icewine production" examines the efficiency in Icewine fermentation of new hybrid yeasts from the Australian Wine Research Institute and an isolated yeast from the surface of Icewine grapes here in Niagara.

Fei defended her thesis before Examining Committee members: Dr. Joffre Mercier, Chair; Dr. John Husnik, External Examiner, Phyterra Yeast Inc.; Dr. Andy Reynolds and Dr. Stuart Rothstein, Committee Members and Dr. Debbie Inglis, Supervisor.

CCOVI and Brock University congratulate Fei for her hard work and diligence in completing her MSc.

Nova Scotia growers and winemakers visit Niagara

The three-day Grapevine Winter Hardiness and Research Update Symposium took place on Jan. 31-Feb. 2 and was organized by CCOVI.

20 delegates from the Nova Scotia grape and wine industry took part in sessions on cool climate research and outreach with CCOVI Viticulturist Jim Willwerth and CCOVI Professional Affiliate Kevin Ker. Also as part of the symposium, they toured Niagara College and Lakeview Vineyard Equipment, met with the GGO and sampled wines at Hillebrand Winery, Schenck Farms and Henry of Pelham.

CCOVI Briefs

VITICULTURE

- C. Huber, graduate student of both CCOVI Professional Affiliate W. McFadden-Smith and CCOVI Director D. Inglis, won second place in the student poster competition for her poster entitled "Grape sour rot in the Niagara region: what causes it and what can we do about it?" at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention at Brock University, Feb. 23-24/11.
- J. Willwerth presented "VineAlert and new vineyard research/outreach projects at CCOVI" at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention at Brock University, Feb. 23/11
- W. McFadden-Smith presented "2010 IPM challenges" at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention at Brock University, Feb. 24/11.

CCOVI Publications

BUSINESS

- Cyr, D., Kusy, M.K. and A.B. Shaw. 2010. Climate change and the potential use of weather derivatives to hedge vineyard harvest rainfall risk in the Niagara region. *Journal of Wine Research* 21 (2-3): 207-227.

The Riesling Experience is back with an expanded two-day program. World-renowned French producer, Pierre Trimbach will open the event with a tutored tasting of his top Rieslings and will discuss his experience with Riesling in Alsace.

Day 1—June 9, 2011

- Keynote speaker: Pierre Trimbach, Domaine Trimbach, France
- "Great Lakes" panel featuring speakers from Michigan, Ohio, New York and Ontario
- Riesling-friendly luncheon including international wines

Where: Hosted at Brock University, St. Catharines, ON

Cost: $125

Day 2—June 10, 2011

- Niagara vineyard tours on the Niagara Bench
- Riesling-friendly luncheon in the vineyards of Cave Spring Cellars

SOLD OUT

For more information and to register, please visit: rieslingexperience.com

CCOVI Lecture Series continues

Featuring talks by CCOVI Researchers, Fellows and Professional Affiliates.

Visit brocku.ca/ccovi/outreach-services/ccovi-lecture-series for more information or for a library of past videos and presentations.

The free lectures are taking place at 3 p.m. EST in Mackenzie Chown Complex, room H313, Brock University.

Ronald Jackson
Wine writer, author
Date: Wednesday, April 20
Topic: Brotytis—the Jekyll-and-Hyde fungus

Gerry Neilsen, Daniel O'Gorman
Research scientists, PARC
Date: Wednesday, April 27
Topic: Grape quality and vine health

Michael Ripmeester (rescheduled lecture)
Professor, Geography, Brock University
Date: Thursday, April 28
Topic: Heritage, identity and wine in Niagara

Live webcasts of the presentations at brocku.ca/ccovi

Watch the lectures on TV

An arrangement between CCOVI and TVCOGECO Niagara will see nine of this year's lectures aired throughout April and May.

The broadcasts kicked off April 2 at 12:30 p.m. and repeat broadcasts are on Tuesdays at 10 p.m. For a schedule of the programs, visit tvcogeco.com.

TVCOGECO

Wine Tasting Challenge winners

On Nov. 29, 2010 close to 300 competitors celebrated their passion for fine wine and spirits at the Four Seasons Hotel in Toronto.

This year's winners and key organizers are from left to right: Phil Sabbatino, Barb Tatarnic, Jonathan Gonsenhauser (3rd place Professional), Evan Saviolidis (Grand Champion), Barclay Robinson (2nd place Professional) and Dr. Ian Brindle.